



Frequently Asked Questions about the Emerald Ash Borer

February, 2006

- 1. Where did the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) come from?** The native range of EAB is eastern Russia, northern China, Japan and Korea.
- 2. When was EAB first discovered in North America?** EAB was first identified in southeast Michigan in 2002. It likely arrived several years earlier.
- 3. How did it get to North America?** We don't know exactly, but it most likely traveled in ash wood used for stabilizing cargo in ships or for packing consumer products.
- 4. Where is EAB now?** As of January, 2006, EAB had been found in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Ontario, Canada. It also appears that small infestations have been eradicated from Virginia and Maryland. EAB has not been detected in Wisconsin.
- 5. How does EAB harm ash trees?** The larval stage of EAB feeds under the bark of trees, cutting off the flow of water and nutrients. Infested trees gradually die over a 2-4 year period.
- 6. Which trees are susceptible?** All sizes and even very healthy ash trees can be killed. All of Wisconsin's native ash trees (green, white and black ash), as well as many horticultural cultivars (cultivated varieties of ash or hybrids between species of ash), are susceptible to EAB infestation. Research studies are ongoing to test for resistance in various cultivars with the hope that some may survive an infestation.
- 7. How important are ash trees to Wisconsin?** There are approximately 717 million ash trees scattered throughout Wisconsin's forests. Ash is also a very common street tree. Ash serves as an important species in our northern and southern forests and is a key component of forests growing in wet areas including swamps and along river ways.
- 8. What does EAB look like?** The adult beetle is dark metallic green and about one-half inch long.
- 9. How does EAB spread?** EAB moves short distances by flying and longer distances through movement of infested ash. Adults typically do not fly far from where they emerge, but this depends on the availability of food (ash trees). In Michigan, studies have shown that the vast majority of insects fly only several hundred yards from where they emerge. EAB is most commonly spread long distances through the movement of infested firewood, nursery stock or ash logs.
- 10. What is being done about EAB?** There is a national effort to limit the spread and impact of EAB. A national plan, coordinated by the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), guides what federal, state and local officials must do to manage this insect. Infested areas are quarantined, which means that selected materials such as ash firewood, nursery stock, and ash logs may not be moved out of infested areas. Eradication of outlying infestations, where all ash within ½ mile of infested trees are cut and destroyed, is being implemented in many areas.

- 11. What is being done in Wisconsin?** The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is currently leading efforts to detect, plan for and regulate the movement of EAB into and within Wisconsin. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Forest Service, DATCP and the University of Wisconsin have conducted detection surveys of areas deemed high risk for introduction of EAB. These include camping areas and locations where ash trees may have been planted within the last 10 years. Public information and education efforts are focusing on reporting possible sightings of EAB and limiting movement of firewood.
- 12. Is there anything I can do now to protect the ash trees in my yard from EAB?** There are chemical treatments available to protect ash trees from EAB, but they are not 100 percent effective. If EAB is found in Wisconsin, the current plan calls for all trees within one-half mile of infested trees to be removed. Chemically-treated trees will also be cut and destroyed if they fall within this eradication zone. The decision to treat is a personal preference, but as long as eradication is planned, treated trees will not be given any special consideration. *The state strategy is guided by the national EAB Science Advisory Panel and its success relies heavily on federal funds. The state's strategy will be constantly evaluated and may change based on new science-based management options, available funding, and any national strategic changes.*
- 13. If I have ash in my woods, should I be doing anything?** Since EAB has not been detected in Wisconsin you need not change your scheduled timber management activities. During regularly scheduled harvest activities, consider maintaining ash at no more than 5-10 trees per acre or at the minimum basal area allowable by your forest management plan. If EAB reaches your stand, the lower density will reduce the economic impact and may slow the spread of the insect. If EAB is found in Wisconsin, areas close to infestations (but outside of eradication areas) may benefit from accelerating ash harvest activities to reduce the amount of food or host material available for the insect. Management options are currently being developed; check with your DNR forest health specialist for the most up-to-date information.
- 14. Should I still consider planting ash in hardwood forest plantations?** Consider limiting ash to 10 percent of the total species mix. Diversity is the key.
- 15. Is ash still a viable choice when considering what to plant in my yard?** In general, having a diversity of species in your yard, on your street or in your community is your best defense against all tree health problems. If ash comprises 10 percent or more of the tree species in your local area, it would be best to choose an alternative. Ongoing studies are testing native ash and cultivars for resistance to EAB feeding injury. Results are preliminary; resistant cultivars may be available at a future date. Check with your state or county horticultural extension agent for the latest information.
- 16. What can I do to help?** Educate yourself on how to recognize signs and symptoms of EAB. Two excellent sources of information may be found at www.emeraldashborer.info and <http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives>. Report possible sightings of EAB by calling 1-800-462-2803. Do not move firewood. Purchase or cut all firewood from the same general location where you plan to use it. When camping or at a cabin, do not take any leftover firewood home with you.